(a) whether the Coffee Board has decided to introduce Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for the employees of Coffee Board;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of the said scheme in detail;

(c) the reasons for introducing such a scheme;

(d) the number of employees who will be affected by the said scheme; and

(e) whether Government are considering extension of implementation of the said scheme so that the benefits of the Vth Pay Commission recommendations can be availed by the employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SH. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir. Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) was introduced in Coffee Board during 1994 when Govt. of India granted 30% Internal Sale Quota (ISQ) for the season 1992-93 and 50% Free Sale Quota (FSQ) for the reason 1993-94 to the coffee growers.

(b) The terms and conditions of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme introduced by the Coffee Board are as follows:—

(i) the scheme is restricted only to the employees working in the Directorate of Marketing whose pay and allowances are met wholly or partially from out of the Pool Fund.

(ii) The scheme is applicable to all the non-interchangeable staff of the Directorate of Marketing.

(iii) Employees who have completed 10 years of service or attained the age of 55 years are eligible to seek voluntary retirement.

Benefits payable are:

(i) Ex-gratia payment equivalent to three months (Pay+DA) for each completed year of service or monthly emoluments at the time of retirement multiplied by the balance months of service left before normal date of retirement, whichever is less.

(ii) Five year additional service weightage as admissible in the case of voluntary retirement is reckoned for the purpose of computation of benefits.

(iii) All other normal benefits like pension, gratuity, commutation etc., are also paid as per the prevailing rules.

(c) Voluntary Retirement Scheme was introduced in Coffee Board to reduce the manpower rendered surplus as a result of reduced marketing activity due to liberalisation of coffee marketing.

(d) A total number of 1686 employees were found surplus on account of liberalisation of coffee policy and are eligible for availing Voluntary reitrement Scheme. A total number of 1322 employees have been relieved.

(e) Extension of implementation of Voluntary Retirement Scheme has no immetiate connection with the report of the Vth Pay Commission as the latter has been constituted only for Central Govt. employees.

Balance of Trade Position

1688. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of imports and exports during the first half of 1996-97 as compared to the same period during 1994-95 and 1995-96;

(b) the trade deficit during the first half of 1996-97 as compared to 1994-95 and 1995-96;

(c) the contribution of POL in the imports of the country during the above period; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to keep the balance of trade under control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLABULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The information required is given below:

(Value in US $ million)

	(APRIL—SEPTEMBER)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
1. Total Exports	11620.6	14609.6	16139.8
2. Total Imports	12851.1	17046.9	17952.9
3. POL & Product Imports	2650.3	3115.9	4427.8
4. Trade Deficit	−1230.5	−2437.3	−1813.1

Source: date from DGCI&S, Calcutta.

(d) The key to reducing trade deficit lies in acelerated export growth. Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through policy and promotional schemes. These include simplification of Export Import Policy Procedures, improving efficiency and competitiveness, focussing on quality and technology upgradation and efforts to involve actively the State Governments in export promotion. Export promotion is a continuing activity based on inter-action with industry, trade and other promotional institutions.

Impact of delicensing of electronic goods industry

1689. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to end licencing controls on the production of "entertainment electronic goods";

(b) the items covered by the decision;

(c) to what extent it will affect the Indian industry; and

(d) whether any protection will be given to it to bear the onslaught of major companies?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have delicensed all items of entertainment electronic industry.

(c) and (d) The latest technology trends indicate convergence of consumer electronics with information technology and professional electronics. Delicensing of entertainment electronic industries would provide greater freedom to the entrepreneurs to take investment and technology decision in the industrial sector which would contribute to greater industrial growth and employment.

Dental of benefits by the Industries under ESI Act to their employees

1690. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that many of the industries in the country such as M/s Formix Industries, Punnathura, Ellumannow, Kerala are showing reluctance to give the benefits of ESI Act to their employees and with the connivance of the officials who are bound to implement the Act avoiding it; and

(b) whether Government would take steps to find out the companies which are avoiding the implementation of the Act and take action against them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) The ESI Act, 1948 is not applicable to